

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHC IMMEDIATE 1442
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2498

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS EG XF
SUBJ: DAYAN SIGNALING A POLICY CHANGE?

1. FONMIN DAYAN YESTERDAY (FEB 22) TOLD THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE THAT HAD THE ARAB STATES PROPOSED A TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF THE WEST BANK, ISRAEL WOULD HAVE GIVEN IT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. DAYAN'S REMARKS WERE PROMPTLY LEAKED TO THE PRESS AND WERE REPORTED ON ISRAEL RADIO SOON AFTER THE MEETING CONCLUDED AS WELL AS IN TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS.

2. DAYAN APPARENTLY WAS REFERRING TO RECENT PEACE EFFORTS. HOWEVER, HE HAS IN THE PAST (E.G. LAST JUNE IN HIS MAIDEN SPEECH BEFORE THE KNESSET AS FONMIN) DEFENDED THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT'S OPPOSITION TO ANY WITH-
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DRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK BY DECLARING THAT NO ARAB GOVERNMENT HAS EVER OFFERED TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN THE AREA. TO MOST OBSERVERS, DAYAN'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY WAS MERELY A REITERATION OF THIS LINE.

3. HOWEVER, WHILE DAYAN MAY NOT HAVE MEANT TO CONVEY ANY CHANGE IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, SUCH A POSSIBILITY

CANNOT BE DISMISSED. THE NRP'S HATZOFEH, FOR ONE, ASKED IN ALARM IN AN EDITORIAL TODAY WHETHER DAYAN WAS SPEAKING FOR THE CABINET AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO NIP THE IDEA IN THE BUD. INTERESTINGLY, LIKUD MK YOSEF TAMIR ATTACHED TO DAYAN'S STATEMENT THE SAME INTERPRETATION AS DID HATZOFEH, WHICH HE SHARED WITH AN EMBOFF YESTERDAY EVEN BEFORE THE REPORT WAS CARRIED ON ISRAEL RADIO. TAMIR TOLD US SOMEWHAT ELLIPTICALLY THAT DAYAN SAID " WE ARE READY TO CONSIDER SOME WITHDRAWAL IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA IF THE ARABS PROPOSE IT." TAMIR IMPLIED THAT THIS WAS A CHANGE IN GOI POLICY, BUT HE WOULD NOT (OR COULD NOT) ELABORATE.

4. DAYAN ALSO TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT THE CURRENT HIATUS IN NEGOTIATIONS IS NOT A RESULT OF ISRAEL'S SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES BUT STEMS FROM SADAT'S CHANGE OF ATTITUDE. HE SAID SADAT IS WORRIED OVER HIS CONTINUED ISOLATION IN THE ARAB WORLD AND PARTICULARLY OVER HUSSEIN'S REFUSAL TO ENTER INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE PREDICTED THAT JORDAN WOULD NOT JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. HAARETZ (BENZIMAN) REPORTED (IN AN EXCLUSIVE) ANOTHER DAYAN STATEMENT WITHOUT INDICATING WHETHER IT WAS PART OF HIS BRIEFING OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, DAYAN SAID HE WAS TOLD IN WASHINGTON THE USE FEARS SADAT WAS RETRACTING HIS SUPPORT OF THE ASWAN DECLARATION. US OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMED DAYAN THAT SADAT WANTS CHANGES IN THE WORDING TO MAKE EXPLICIT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT ISRAEL'S AGREEMENT TO WITHDRAWAL WILL APPLY TO ALL FRONTS.

6. COMMENT: IN OUR JUDGEMENT DAYAN'S REMARKS ABOUT A TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE ON THE WEST BANK WERE PART OF HIS EFFORT TO ASSURE THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FLEXIBILITY AND THAT IT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT NEGOTIATION IMPASSE. KNOWING DAYAN'S DISDAIN FOR THE COMMITTEE, WE DOUBT HE WOULD USE THAT FORUM TO UNVEIL A POLICY CHANGE. LEWIS

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